

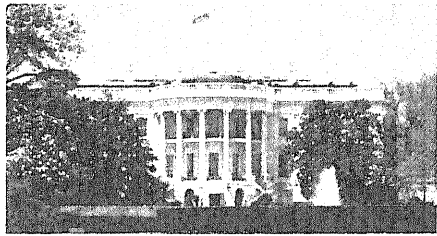
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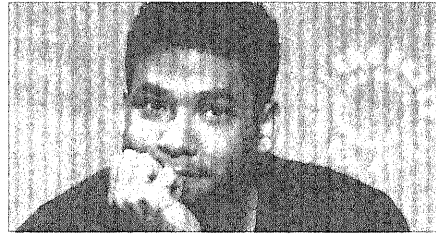
Issue #11



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CSI's Student Accessibility Issues Brought to Light

How CSI's Disabled Students Should Be Supported

BY: MARK DEUTSCH

The lack of specific services for disabled students at CSI has not only affected student Jacky Zhao, but also many other students in need of swift mobility across campus and academic support.

There are several concerns that have been expressed regarding disabled students, yet they are still in the works for now.

The main cause of these issues surrounding disabled students is that the CSA (Center for Student Accessibility) Office is lacking funding and assistance in some respects.

When CSI student Jacky Zhao was asked what specifically has affected his experiences at CSI, he expressed the difficulties that have arisen.

Stemming from the funding issue, there are not enough note takers to handle the current amount of students in need.

Obviously, note takers do take notes, but they are for students that can't physi-



cally write. This is vital for those students who need some way to facilitate jotting down notes.

Now, as for why there are a lack of note takers and some other functions needed to provide students with optimal education is due to the CSA itself.

The lack of these services hinders the daily routine of students, ultimately causing a ruckus that shouldn't happen in the first place. But, this fault comes from an issue that plagues any and every department in any institution.

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There's a New Club in Town

All You Need to Know about the CLIP Dolphin Club

BY: VALERIE GONZALEZ

When was the last time you felt like an outsider or that you didn't belong? College is or can be a really difficult time if you are going through it alone, now imagine you must go through that but also not knowing English properly.

The CLIP Dolphin Club is a brand-new Club on campus that not only offers you support but it offers you a family you can count on when you are, or feel like, an outsider in college.

President, Syed Raza, and the Vice-President, Manal Naj, of CDC shared great memories and information about CDC and the benefits you get from joining them.

"The idea of opening a club came to our minds because we always felt like outsiders," is how the president of the CDC Club explained how they introduced the idea of the CDC.

"We all wanted to have a space to come together and feel comfortable because it all started when we were ESL students."

CDC is a club that welcomes every single student from CSI, but also has members that are ESL students.

Often, ESL students are uncomfortable with making connections or friends, so CDC is giving them the opportunity to get to know people that have gone or is going through the same process.

In addition, the club decided to make it their mission to inform their members about a lot

Continued on pg #4

Promising Progress for CSI Student Government

Sophomore Senator Aims to Improve the Experience at CSI

BY: SAMMY QUARRATO

Progress is one of the main objectives that any campus, community or country wishes to make more than anything.

Photo Credit: Facebook.com



The fact of the matter is that progress is often difficult to upkeep and the type of progress has usually been a topic of debate and discussion for all those entities involved.

Often when that progress is hindered or in a place that cannot be broken through, change is the first thing that comes to mind, usually for good reason as well.

CSI is no different, and that is why Maxwell Velikodny, who is now known as Senator, will be one of the leading figures to lead that change into CSI.

Often, people do not find any reason as to why they should care for how their

college campuses are maintained. One of the many issues that the campus has that could be quickly solved is the fact that the walkways are cracked, causing difficulties for students, especially those with disabilities. Fixing this is just one of Velikodny's campaign promises.

An often overlooked program at CSI that the students should back up is our funding for the study abroad program that Senator Velikodny wishes to put a great amount of his efforts in.

He stated the lack of funding we receive compared to other CUNY Colleges is "Disgusting that we don't get anywhere

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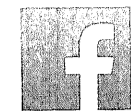
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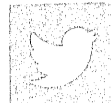
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BANNER POLITICS

The Race Begins For 2020

Who Will Take The Cake As The New President Of The United States?

BY: ROSEANNE CASSAR

The Presidential race is on for the 2020 election. In this election there are 13 candidates, plus President Donald Trump running for another four years. Will President Trump have the golden opportunity to continue to "Make America Great Again?"

What promises are these politicians making to stand out, capture the American people, and sway votes during the polls? The running candidates include: Cory Booker, Pete Buttigieg, and Julian Castro. John Delaney, Tulsi Gabbard, and Kirsten Gillibrand. Kamala Harris, Amy Klobuchar, and Bernie Sanders. Elizabeth Warren, Marianne Williamson, Andrew Yang, Donald J. Trump, and William F. Weld.

Although the election is over a year away, it is important to understand every candidate's motto. Cast your vote for the person that you resonate with most. The New York Times highlights the background of the candidates that have joined the race so far.

Cory Booker (D) is a Senator from New Jersey and former Mayor of Newark. "I believe that we can build a country where no one is forgotten, no one is left behind...where we see the faces of our leaders on television and feel pride, not shame." Booker's main concerns revolve around reforming criminal justice and unifying the country.

Pete Buttigieg (D) is the Mayor of South Bend, Indiana and a military veteran. "I launched a presidential exploratory committee because it is a season for boldness and it is time to focus on the future."

Buttigieg "has stressed his generational identity and called for policies on issues like climate change and economic opportunity."

Julian Castro (D) is the former Housing Secretary and former Mayor of San Antonio. "I'm running for President because it's time for new leadership. Because it's time

woman from Hawaii and an Army National Guard Veteran. "There are a lot of challenges that are facing the American people that I'm concerned about and that I want to help solve." Gabbard's main issues include "opposition to American military intervention overseas, including in countries like Syria."



Photo Credit: CavsConnect.com Many Democratic hopefuls are on track to seize the presidency.

for new energy." Castro endorses universal prekindergarten, "Medicare for all" and immigration reform.

John Delaney (D) is a former Congressman from Maryland and businessman. "I think I'm the right person for the job, but not enough people knew who I was or still know who I am." Delaney "has pitched himself as a bipartisan problem-solver; but has also endorsed liberal causes like universal health care."

Tulsi Gabbard (D) is the Congress-

trict attorney. "I believe our country wants and needs some leadership that provides a vision of the country in which everyone could see themselves." She "unveiled middle-class tax cut legislation last fall, and has championed a liberal civil rights agenda in the senate."

Amy Klobuchar (D) is a Senator from Minnesota and a former Hennepin County attorney. "It is time to organize, time to galvanize, time to take back our democracy." She "has championed legislation to combat the opioid crisis and drug addiction, and to address the cost of prescription drugs."

Bernie Sanders (D), the runner up for the Democratic nomination of the 2016 election, is a Senator from Vermont and a former congressman. "The only way we will win this election and create a government and economy that work for all is with a grassroots movement - the likes of which has never been seen in American history."

Sanders advocates for "Medicare for all," free college tuition, and decreasing the influence of Washington billionaires.

Elizabeth Warren (D) is a Senator from Massachusetts and a former Harvard professor. "It's time for women to go to Washington and fix our broken government, and that includes a woman at the top."

Warren's main concern is "Income inequality and what she sees as a middle class under attack from big corporations and political corruption."

While most candidates that have joined the race so far are Democrats, campaigning is only beginning. Voters should expect a range of choices for 2020.

A National Emergency That Challenges President Trump Politically and Legally

Should The President Have Declared A National Emergency?

BY: DEJON VIRGO

On February 15th, 2019 President Donald J. Trump declared a national emergency at the southern border so he could get the money he needed to build a wall. After a 35-day partial government shutdown, Trump was trying to force the hand of Congress, mostly Democrats, to fund his border wall.

The declaration has been challenged in courts by the ACLU, landowners, and a coalition of 16 states (including New York). Congress gave the President the power to declare a national emergency from the National Emergency Act of 1976.

According to ABC News, a national

emergency would give the President access to 3.5 billion dollars from the military construction budget. The legal challenge from 16 states say that the President doesn't have the authority to use these funds because Congress has the power of the purse.

This argument will be hard to win because the National Emergency Act doesn't give much detail on what it's about, so it will be hard to prove that the President doesn't have this power.

The landowners argue that the Trump administration doesn't have the power to eminent domain their property because Congress did not approve the funds. Eminent domain is when the government takes

someone's property for public use and must provide just compensation for the owners.

This is a more compelling argument because eminent domain from the federal government needs congressional approval - and Trump is using a national emergency to go around Congress.

The ACLU uses both arguments to say that Trump doesn't have the power to declare a national emergency and overcome Congress. They also say that the administration can't take the private property of citizens to build the wall.

The court cases could take months or even years to settle while Trump will use the 1.347 billion dollars that Congress approved. Trump will also use another 600 million dollars from the Treasury Department's drug forfeiture and 2.5 billion dollars from the Pentagon's drug interdiction program.

The total amount of money that Trump will use for the wall is 4.475 billion dollars which is still lower than the 5.7 billion dollars he wanted from Congress during the shutdown.

Other aspects of the national emergency are the political effects. Republicans in the Senate urged Trump not to declare a national emergency because it is seen as an executive overreach.

The most important reason the Republicans didn't want the national emergency

is because if the courts upheld the declaration, when a Democrat eventually becomes President they could use a national emergency for climate change, gun control, or healthcare purposes. Trump didn't listen to them mostly because his 2016 campaign was built on his promise to "build the wall."

Most Republicans eventually lined up behind the President like Mitch McConnell, the Senate Majority Leader, who at first urged Trump not to declare a national emergency. Congress can block the emergency declaration, which is what the House of Representatives moved to do on February 26th.

The measure passed the House with a margin of 245-182; 13 Republicans voted for it.

The resolution will go to the Senate where it has a chance of passing because three Republicans said they will vote with Democrats and several other Republicans are undecided. Even if the resolution passes the Senate, the President can veto the resolution.

Trump states that he will veto if the resolution reaches his desk. It's unlikely that there will be enough votes in both chambers to overturn the veto.

The national emergency has created both legal and political challenges for Trump and it doesn't look like the issue will be resolved anytime soon.



Photo Credit: BangorDailyNews.com Uncle Sam and Trump arguing about the national emergency.

BANNER NEWS

"Student Accessibility Issues" Continued from Front Page

That problem is the lack of funding that has been provided to the CSA, resulting in weaker services for those who need it.

That problem can be fixed if the budget can get enough assets in the future, even then it will take either a short or long span of time. So there's the main background of the problems that are happening, now let's go into some further problems that need addressing.

Another important issue for students that depend on motorized wheelchairs or other means of moving across campus, is that the sidewalks are too rocky and uneven.

Looking down on the bumpy cobblestones and the cracked sidewalks reveals the deplorable conditions. This type of terrain lengthens the commute to get to class on time.

So- how soon can it be fixed?

Given the amount of time that it will take to acquire the funding itself, plus the time needed to fix the roads may be years.

Even this guess entails wading through the swamps of bureaucracy, along with repairing the roads themselves. Now that issue won't be resolved any time soon, but there are some small fry problems that could be addressed.

The push panels in front of every entrance that are installed for the use of



Photo Credit: Veronica Pistek

The cracked and rugged sidewalks are not safe for mobility. Handicapped people currently have minor issues.

That problem is that some of the push



Photo Credit: Veronica Pistek

panels are set too high- hopefully this issue can be dealt with in the near future.

As for all of these problems that are voiced without any action taken to fix them, there unfortunately seems to be no temporary solutions to bridge them.

Now there may be more problems that occur in the future - problems that may unexpectedly crop up out of nowhere.

If need be, more supporters or assistance would be greatly appreciated.

Note that these are serious problems that may not seem significant to those unbothered by them.

Think of awakening or at least start noticing the various problems that are troubling those who need help, by lending a hand to hasten certain decisions.

If possible, lend any support to the CSA so that these current issues can be settled sooner rather than later.

"There's a New Club"

Continued from Front Page

of benefits, opportunities, tutoring and support for their needs on campus.

"Meeting new people and new cultures is what inspired us the most, we are a very diverse group," explained one of the leaders. CDC is an open space for every culture, religion, belief, and person-

ality; they want everyone to feel at home whenever they go to the meetings or to the events.

CDC also has answers to every question you have regarding financial aid, counseling, tutoring and guidance. It is important to recognize that you don't have to be an ESL student to be part of CDC, "the doors are open to everyone."

Their main goal is to make everyone feel at home and give everyone the support and guidance they're asking for, they have all been in your shoes and are willing to be there for you as much as they wanted someone to be there for them when they needed it.

Joining a club in college can give you the best opportunities in your profession-

al career or personal development.

What better chance to join a club or group that will give you a taste of different cultures, languages and experiences.

At the end of the day we are all looking for ways to fulfill our knowledge that will make us feel better and more secure about ourselves.



Photo Credit: Instagram.com

Some of the members of CDC at a meeting, from CDC Instagram's account.

BANNER NEWS

"CSI Student Government" Continued from Front Page



Photo Credit: Veronica Pistek

A promise for improved sidewalks, programs, and communications.

near the funding that the other CUNY Colleges receive."

A strong statement, yes, but that's something that a student government needs, or any type of government that wishes to keep progress as consistent and as beneficial as possible.

Finally one of the biggest concerns with the college, or any college for that matter, is the tutoring. Students who are struggling in a particular subject or class and reach out to those that are experts in those fields, but the problem is that it isn't helping and that alone should concern every single individual on campus, period.

You cannot have a successful academic foundation much less a functioning college without those tutors. Students need to be led toward the correct direction, so the school needs to find those who are willing to put more effort into this job because in some sense, it's a part of the back bone of CSI and every college in America.

The election for Student Government has already happened, but that doesn't mean we should forget about it until the next election, it means that we need to be on top of Student Government just like our own government at this present time, and be as hawkish as possible.

Any government without people voicing their opinions won't know what to do and will possibly take that as complete satisfaction with the way that things are.

It's not to say we should constantly moan and groan about silly things that a college campus couldn't, and in some cases shouldn't, provide us services, when that campus practically does every single thing for us.

But it does mean that we should al-

ways be, in some ways, a constructive critic of the campus while also being a staunch supporter of what the student government does- because that's how we stay unified and have clear cut goals for

this place.

There are of course many other Senators that have been elected and The Banner will cover each of their goals and activities to remind ourselves and to keep

the college up to date on what they plan to do for us.

But the most important thing to remember about any of this is that progress is key.

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Photo Credit: Facebook.com

LIFESTYLES

A Farewell to Karl Lagerfeld

Remembering One of the Most Prestigious Designers of the 21st Century

BY: VALERIE GONZALEZ

On February 19, one of the greatest designers of all time passed away. This is not a goodbye article about him—it's a celebration of how lucky we were to see a beautiful mind in action. Karl Lagerfeld died at age 85 in Paris, France.

Lagerfeld was the creative director of Chanel and Fendi. He started working for Chanel at 36 years old. His vision was to revive Chanel without taking away its signature looks, which consisted of tweed skirt suits, little black dresses and handbags.

Lagerfeld's vision was very pop-culture inspired and so he worked his way to represent Coco's vision of independence, freedom and modernity, adding more color and uniqueness to it with his pop-culture inspired collections. One of his quotes that will always be a positive reminder was to, "Continue to embrace the present and invent the future."

He created six to eight collections for Chanel per year and was also creating collections for Fendi and his own line. His inspiration went farther than just clothes, but had also delved into creating a complete "Art Show" for every single collection, from sets and runways to lighting. His art shows became one of the most memorable

experiences for every person in the room.

With his all-time look of wearing dark sunglasses, black leather gloves and a white ponytail, Lagerfeld became an icon for the 21st century fashion world. "I am like a caricature of myself, and I like that."



Karl Lagerfeld surrounded by models

He had a very distinct way of thinking: his public opinions would always lead to a bigger controversy with comments like, "No one wants to see curvy women on the catwalk." The way Lagerfeld expressed himself was always either inspiring or hurtful towards people.

So, in 2013 we had the pleasure to receive, "The World According to Karl" by Jean-Christophe Napias. Here, all his crazy opinions and quotations were collected.

Lagerfeld once said, "You have to live your life according to your ideas. Spend all

Photo Credit: Vogue.com

your money and live life in line with what you are fighting for..."

Lagerfeld was an amazing photographer and director. He enjoyed working with cameras as much as he enjoyed working with fabrics and sketchbooks. He would plan every single detail about his

own campaigns. "I am not like all those art directors now, who have 20 people sketching.

I do it all myself." As a signature of uniqueness, he was a part of such campaigns.

Lagerfeld had an inspiring way of working. He was never satisfied enough with a collection and would always find inspiration after every single show. He never stopped and wasn't planning on doing so. "Ideas come to you when you work," he said backstage before a Fendi show at age 83 to The New York Times.

The 21st Century has been remarkable in many ways, our technology and development of society will always be unforgettable, and so will be Karl Lagerfeld, not just because he changed our entire vision of women and fashion or because he was an amazing director, but because he found the precise amount of art that truly created fashion as we know it.

He expressed how important it was to state something meaningful with your designs.

Lagerfeld wasn't just a designer, he was a professor that influenced our everyday lives and will be unforgettable for this generation and those to come.

Thank you, Karl. R.I.P

An Obsession to Look Pretty

How Korean Idols are Influencing the World to Look More Like Them

BY: GABRIELL KLEYDMAN

A lot of the things that we as a generation do are influenced by those around us that have some sort of impact on our way of life. The very same can be said of how people view beauty as a result of the South Korean Pop industry.

The K-pop industry is a dominating music industry not just in South Korea anymore, but all around the world. Along with the beautifully designed choreography and music, comes a different take on

Photo Credit: Luxnomade.com

beauty standards.

The groups or bands that are released into the industry possess an unnatural beauty amongst themselves. In one way or another, they are revamping what being pretty used to be.

These idols, as they are called, come into the public with anime-like features, such as a V-shaped face which is typically unnatural. This surgery is called V-line surgery.

This surgery involves 'breaking and

shaving' the jawline. Rather than getting this surgery for appearances, this surgery has been known as a procedure that is done only when someone's teeth are misaligned.

There is also a risk of death and months upon months of pain when it comes to this procedure. Many though, especially those living in South Korea, view the dangers that come along with this surgery as merely a small obstacle towards their goal of ultimate beauty.

Plastic surgery, something that does not take place too often in America, is more or less an everyday thing in South Korea. Advertisement that we would see for movies and actors are more often than not replaced with advertisements that are promoting these types of surgeries.

Even before Korean pop music became what it has today, in Korea the current generation of youth was being raised understanding that surgery was a fundamental part of their society, something that has always seemed so bizarre to Americans.

At this point, being beautiful, whether that constitutes as looking like a Korean idol or not, is so deeply ingrained in society. It is even built into an everyday workplace; in order to succeed you need to be beautiful.

There are other aspects of Korean beauty that are being adopted more and more by everyone else around the world that do not have to do with plastic surgery

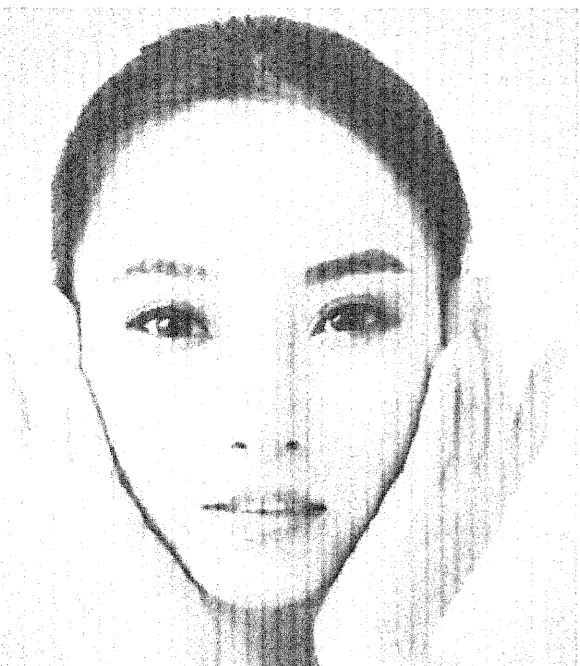
and are still being promoted by the general public and Korean idols alike.

Many of us constantly marvel at how clear and near-porcelain Korean skin looks. Besides the aspect of genetics, this kind of skin can actually be achievable through something called The Ten Step Korean Skin Care Routine.

Created by a company called Soko Glam, it has become, "a global phenomenon, grounded in Korea's obsession with healthy skin, and backed by decades of scientific advancement."

Beginning with a makeup remover, the routine calls for two different types of cleansers: an oil-based cleanser, a water-based cleanser, an exfoliator to remove a layer of dead skin, a toner to remove any leftover excess from the cleansers, essence that helps with cell turnover, treatments that include serums which help with the reduction of acne or age lines, sheet masks that infuse your skin with essence, eye cream that prevents dark circles and puffiness, moisturizer that smooths your skin, and finally, some sunscreen.

South Korea has influenced not only their population, but the rest of the world as well with what they think makes someone beautiful. As extreme as their methods may be to becoming beautiful, slowly but surely the rest of the world is adopting aspects of it, changing the way society views beauty.



The V-shaped face and porcelain skin is the new definition of beauty.

LIFESTYLES

10 Ways to Boost Self-Confidence

New Ways to Build Confidence You Haven't Thought About

BY: BRIANNA MCHUGH

Self-confidence is something everyone struggles with at some point in their life. A change in your everyday routine may be the difference between feeling down to feeling empowered.

Keeping track of your daily goals is a simple way to feel accomplished. In a notepad, create a weekly to-do list, and each day try to check off one goal. The action of checking off a goal is a sure way to be and feel more productive.

Looking in the mirror everyday may seem like it could do the opposite of achieving self-confidence. However, looking in the mirror everyday forces you to become comfortable in your own skin. Taking the time to say, "I love myself. I am important," and repeating this positive affirmation can help boost self-confidence.

You should also invest your time in joining a club. Clubs are a great way to interact with people that have a shared interest. Many people that join clubs make lifelong friendships. Taking a step out of your comfort zone in order to reach out and socialize is a great first step.

Another way to boost confidence is to take a social media cleanse. Many people spend over two hours a day on social media platforms. The hours spent looking at

other people's lives may lead you to comparing yourself to others on a subconscious level. It is a sure way to get FOMO and feel left out. I strongly suggest a social media cleanse to put your life back into perspective.

Eating nutritious food is a great way to boost self-confidence. Greasy and heavy foods may be weighing you down and affecting your overall mood. Replacing an unhealthy meal with a nutrient-dense meal allows your body to be well nourished.

Also, exercising is a known way to boost your mood and self-confidence. Simple exercises can gradually lead to challenging yourself every day. Exercising can be done anywhere! It could be a simple home workout, a bike ride around the park, or even a jog around the block.

Yoga is a powerful tool to connect the mind and body. Setting a simple 10-60 minutes aside a day to focus on breathing techniques, meditation, and yoga poses can reduce anxiety and stress. There are free yoga videos via YouTube and free apps you can download on your phone that you can use to get into the routine of daily yoga.

Volunteering at a local animal shelter is also another option. Being surrounded by animals is a great way to feel the extra love. Animals supply an endless amount of

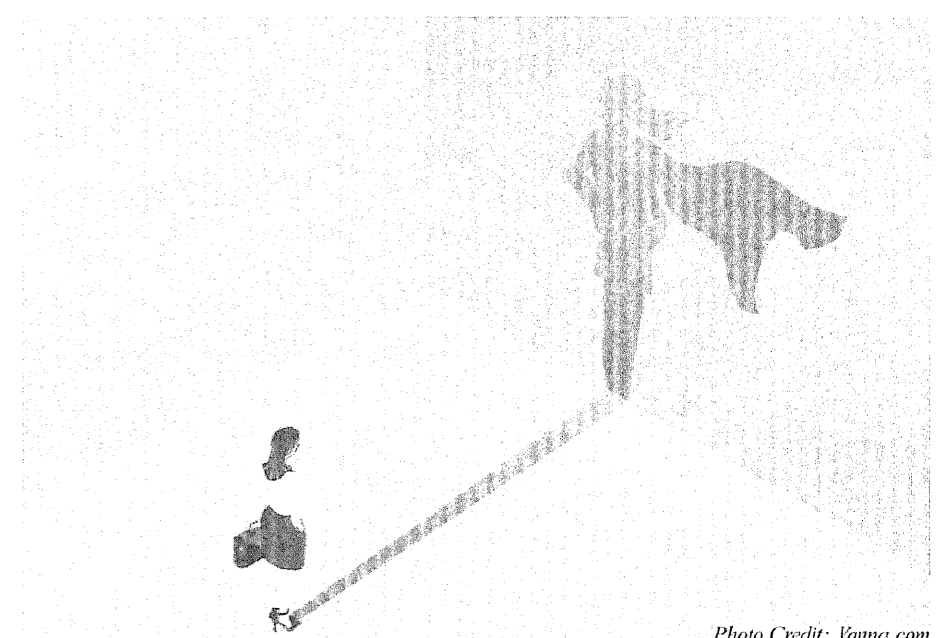


Photo Credit: Vanna.com

Confidence is created through self-love and consistent routine.

love for those that take care of them. Also, giving back to the community allows you to feel accomplished and important.

You can also clean your bedroom. It might sound like another annoying chore your mom repeats to you. However, cleaning your room allows you to become organized. A clean-living space allows for clear thinking and a higher level of productivity.

Spend a night out with the girls or boys. Sometimes we distance ourselves from friends and family when we are not

feeling our best. Put on a cute outfit and push yourself to go out with your closest friends. Being surrounded by people you are comfortable with can impact your mood in a positive way.

Confidence is not something that is gained overnight. In order to see results in yourself, you should keep a routine. Practice at least one thing on the list above for at least 30 days. Don't give up—confidence can be built!

Can You Deal With Celebrity Status and Feel Healthy?

Balancing a Healthy Celebrity Lifestyle

BY: KYLE FORBES

Lebron James became a first generation money-maker at the age of 18.

"Being a first generational money-maker in the household is a scary thing for an 18-year-old," James said. "I went from sitting in classrooms and in May, graduating high school, to being a multi-millionaire a month later, in June, which is insane."

James was offered a 10 million dollar check from Reebok. The catch was that if James promised this sneaker company to not visit Nike or Adidas, he could accept the check.

As the story goes, James accepted a check from Nike worth close to 90 million dollars. Thinking about positive future possibilities and decisions could benefit a person's healthy way of functioning when under pressure.

James later accepted endorsements from Beats, Intel, Sprite, and Kia. The Lakers star also became a spokesman and investor for Blaze Pizza.

The Akron native also participates as a consumer of Unknwn, which is a sneaker and designer clothing retail company. James also partially owns a portion of Liverpool FC.

Liverpool FC is a professional football club in Liverpool, England.

There may also come a "Space Jam 2" sequel to the first "Space Jam" starring Michael Jordan, and the Looney Tunes characters. The Lakers star also participated in designing a \$51,000 limited-edition watch.

The professional basketball athlete

also uses a cryotherapy chamber, which he uses for about two to three minutes to relieve pain and recover muscle function.

But with all the wealth and fame, could such pressures always represent a healthy life?

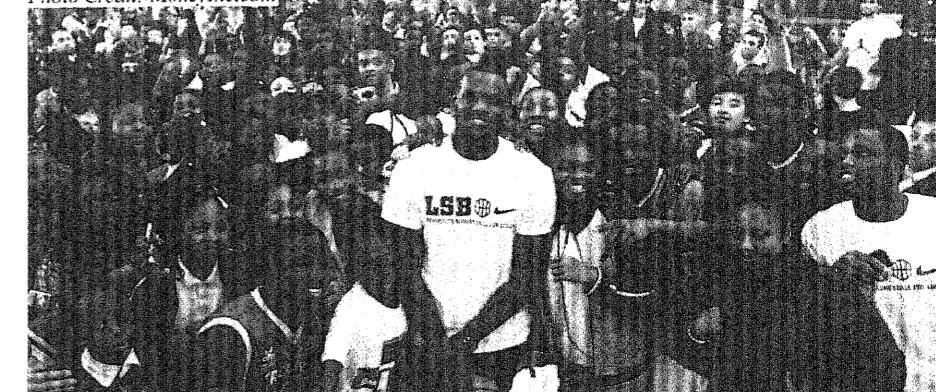
According to a study at the University of Rochester in New York, true happiness comes from having close relationships. The study also reports that true happiness comes from being involved in the lives of people in your community.

However, James is wealthy and famous. Isn't this supposed to be the definition of happiness for people coming from a poor background?

Not always. According to a reading, "Being a Celebrity: A Phenomenology of Fame," by Donna Rockwell and David C. Giles, a participant who experienced fame and had his fair share of views on the feeling of popularity.

"Once you're famous, you don't make

Photo Credit: MoneyInc.com



A healthy feeling of happiness could come from a role model status.

eye contact or you keep walking...and you just don't hear [people calling your name]."

Another participant who experienced the feeling of celebrity status had his views about the adaptive patterns. "I don't want to go out if I don't feel good about looking forward to meeting anybody or just being nice to people."

As suggested, there seems to be a relationship between popularity, health, happiness, and feeling the pressures of achieving goals. So, what could be the solution?

Those participants who dealt with the world of celebrity life see their opportunity to "give back," "inspire," be a "role model," or "make a difference" in the lives of others.

According to the same reading: "You've got to realize that you're just wearing the suit, that someone else wore it before you, that someone will wear it behind you, and that it's only a suit."

Some celebrities report worrying about never feeling comfortable being themselves in public again. With Celebrity Worship Syndrome playing a role in 1/3 of the population and parasocial relationships developing with people of the public, holding onto a private life involves a certain surrender.

In order to deal with the tough attention, celebrities report creating two selves. One self is focused on a role offered to the public and the other made for moments of privacy and intimacy.

One of Sean "Diddy" Combs Hitmen, LV, who is a producer in the hip-hop world has some advice. According to a Youtube video, his advice is that if you know yourself then you could deal with the pressures of instant fame.

Viewed by some people from the 80's as a hip-hop legend in the game, Too Short also has some advice. According to a Youtube video, the advice he offers is to stick to the business of what gets you famous than trying to become famous.

Sounds like hard working athletes and people like James and others know how to deal with the pressures of popularity, happiness and feeling healthy. James himself is reported to practically spend close to 1.5 million dollars for maintaining his physical health.

To conclude, it is possible to achieve celebrity status and maintain a healthy lifestyle, both physically and mentally, but it will take sacrifice and a willingness to rearrange your life in drastic ways.

BANNER ARTS

This is an S.O.S: The Boys are Back!

We're All Suckers for the Jonas Brothers New Song

BY: VALERIE GONZALEZ

Six years... we've been waiting six years for the best comeback ever, and what a way to do so!

The Jonas Brothers took a long break from their band and we're not mad with the results. In the past, Nick and Joe went separate ways and filled our mature years with amazing albums and singles such as "Jealous" and "Cake By the Ocean", which showed us how mature and versatile their voices are.

Kevin on the other hand, took his time to form a beautiful family with two adorable daughters. Lots of love filled the Jonas family these past years, as shown in the newest Jonas Brothers video "Sucker," which introduced the newest additions to the family, the JSisters, who include Danielle Jonas, Priyanka Chopra Jonas and Sophie Turner.

The JoBros wanted a big and memorable comeback. The official video of "Sucker" was amazingly made and directed with the help of Ryan Tedder. The music video told a mature and lusty story between the three couples, showing us an amazing family affair with stunning sets, costumes and closeups of the boys.

The video went live to the public in all platforms on March 1st, but before this digital piece of art came out, the JoBros

announced a comeback in February 28th with rumors of a tour this upcoming summer. As always, the Jonas Brothers killed it, within less than eight hours live, the Jonas Brothers were number one on iTunes and most digital platforms.

After seeing the boys as Disney figures



The Jonas Brothers and their partners star in their new music video "Sucker." Photo Credit: Billboard.com

for many years, having a public life and sharing their friendships, relationships, dramas, etc. the idea of coming back and introducing their lovers in the music video "Sucker" has warmed our hearts, and we are here for it.

The new members of the Jonas fami-

ly have filled our hearts in so many ways, Nick and Priyanka's wedding was a dream come true. Joe and Sophie's relationship has set our "relationship goals" to the max and not to mention Kevin's daughters always put a smile on our face whenever he posts a video or photo of them.

The reunion of the Jonas Brothers has brought joy to everyone and we all can't wait to see what's on the books for them and their families. It has become clear that the bond between this trio and their family is amazing.

We have seen their up and downs and

confessions on their latest interviews about how difficult it was to be Disney stars and be adolescents full of emotions, which all added up to being role models for their audience. They passed through that and are more than ready to start this new and exciting chapter.

The JoBros came back strong, its been more than a week or so after their single "Sucker" came out and they've had two unofficial shows, one in NYC, at The Box and one in LA, at El Rey Theatre. At these venues, the brothers sang their old hits like "Year 3000" and "Lovebug" as well as their new single "Sucker," leaving their old fans speechless and gaining some potential new fans.

While we are looking forward for the tour's confirmation, the album and documentary in partnership with Amazon, we enjoyed more information and updates of the JoBros on the exclusive Late Late Show edition, #LateLateJonas week.

This was filled with anecdotes of how the JoBros came back to the picture, news, marriages, a Carpool Karaoke and an amazing version of their song, "Year 3000" this past week. Get ready everyone, the fangirls had woken up from a long (6 year) nap and nothing can stop them!

The Perfect Event for Those with a Sweet Tooth

A Son for a Son When Blood is Spilled

BY: ROSEANNE CASSAR

Calling all chocoholics and foodies, have we got news for you! The Chocolate Expo, an event dedicated to chocolate, where patrons can sample and purchase local chocolatiers' sweet creations as well as participate in fun events, is coming to New Jersey on March 31st.

This unique event focuses more on the local chocolate companies in the New York/New Jersey area. There are other products to sample and purchase besides chocolate, which include candies, baked goods, wines, cheeses and more.

The Chocolate Expo is the nation's largest chocolate event and is located in New York and New Jersey.

The Chocolate Expo is held at Rutgers Athletic Center in Piscataway, New Jersey

Photo Credit: TheChocolateExpo.com



Mouth-watering chocolates on display.

from 10am to 7pm.

Tickets went on sale March 3rd and are currently \$15 online and \$20 at the door. Another sweet treat for attendees is that they can meet Paris Themmen, who played the original Mike Tee Vee from "Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory" at the expo.

Recently, it was held at The Cradle of Aviation Museum on March 3rd in Garden City, New York. In addition to chocolate, patrons were able to explore the air and space exhibits at the Pan Am Museum and watch cooking demonstrations.

Attendees could view a sculpture of the moon landing made out of cookies and chocolates. Another fun event patrons could watch was the Chocolate Challenge where three chefs face off against each other, making the best dish using chocolate.

For those with kids, there was a place where children could get their face painted, receive balloon animals, and meet Star Wars characters and storybook princesses.

The Chocolate Expo was also held at Garden State Plaza on January 27th in Paramus, New Jersey. Attendees celebrated the 50th anniversary of Chitty Chitty Bang Bang and had the opportunity to meet actor Adrian Hall who starred as Jeremy Potts in the film.

On October 21st, the event was held at Museum Village in Monroe, New York. Patrons participated in a cupcake decorating class and were entertained by live music and sideshow performers such as Coney Island Circus Sideshow and Adam Real Man.

According to The Chocolate Expo official website, the idea for the event started when Marvin Baum developed the successful idea for the Woodstock 35th Anniversary Celebration.

Marvin Baum was in charge of the Baum image group which had been involved with imaging systems. Baum later joined up with Elliot Landy, a photographer of the Woodstock Festival to work on an event for Woodstock's 35th anniversary.

However, Baum realized that no arrangements were made to create the event and set out to create the event himself. Baum finally found a venue to host the cel-

ebration, the New York State Museum in Albany. There, he could display Landy's photography, artifacts from Woodstock and arranged a concert with Woodstock '69 performers.

Baum, Landy and the museum only had four months to promote the event and on top of that, the museum didn't budget enough money to have an opening reception. Luckily, Baum networked with many food companies in New York and had them sell their goods at the reception.

The vendors helped boost the celebration's popularity and the museum wound up having the largest opening reception in their history.

Baum's Woodstock celebration received tons of recognition. Due to his success, Baum decided to switch from a technology company to an event planning one. In 2006, Baum created a chocolate event for New York's official holiday celebration in Albany, which led to the creation of The Chocolate Expo.

The Chocolate Expo is widely celebrated by many, hosting 30 to 90+ vendors and mustering in hundreds of people. It offers a wide array of activities and will be sure to keep you busy throughout the day.

Tickets for this chocolate paradise can be purchased on The Chocolate Expo's official website. Get yours now and indulge in all things chocolate!

BANNER ARTS

"The Umbrella Academy" Shields its Audience from Despair

Eight Days is Just Enough for a Family to Reunite

BY: SALVATORE CENTO

A new television series, "The Umbrella Academy," which was adapted from a Dark Horse comic book, combines the superhero team aspect of Marvel's X-men with the gritty, dark realism of DC's Watchmen.

The show was released on February 15th, 2019. It was developed by Steve Blackman and Jeremy Slater.

The series is centered around seven adults with supernatural powers that were adopted as children by an odd billionaire who goes by the name of Sir Reginald Hargreeves.

Not only are they trained and sent out on missions to stop those with bad intentions under his wing, but one of his first undertakings is that they replace their real names with numbers.

The viewer hops on board when Numbers One through Seven must reunite at the mansion where they were raised after years of all living separate lives, because their adoptive father was found dead by their cyborg mother, Grace.

All seems kind of simplistic until the end of the first episode when Number Five spews out of a temporal anomaly in the garden of the Umbrella Academy and tells the rest of his family that the world ends in eight days.

This is also where things take a turn. For the better and for the worse.

The powers that are imbued to each and every one of our numbered ensemble are quite unique.

While Luther's upper body is that of an ape, his lower body is normal. Diego has the ability of curving to an exact measure-

ment anything he throws, which is usually knives.

Allison can manipulate anybody by whispering "I heard a rumor that..." into their ear. Klaus can not only communicate with the dead but at times use their strength as well.

Number Five can jump through space and time just by running. Ben can let monstrous creatures out from under his skin.

Vanya who is Number Seven, as we later find out, can use sound waves to cause destruction.

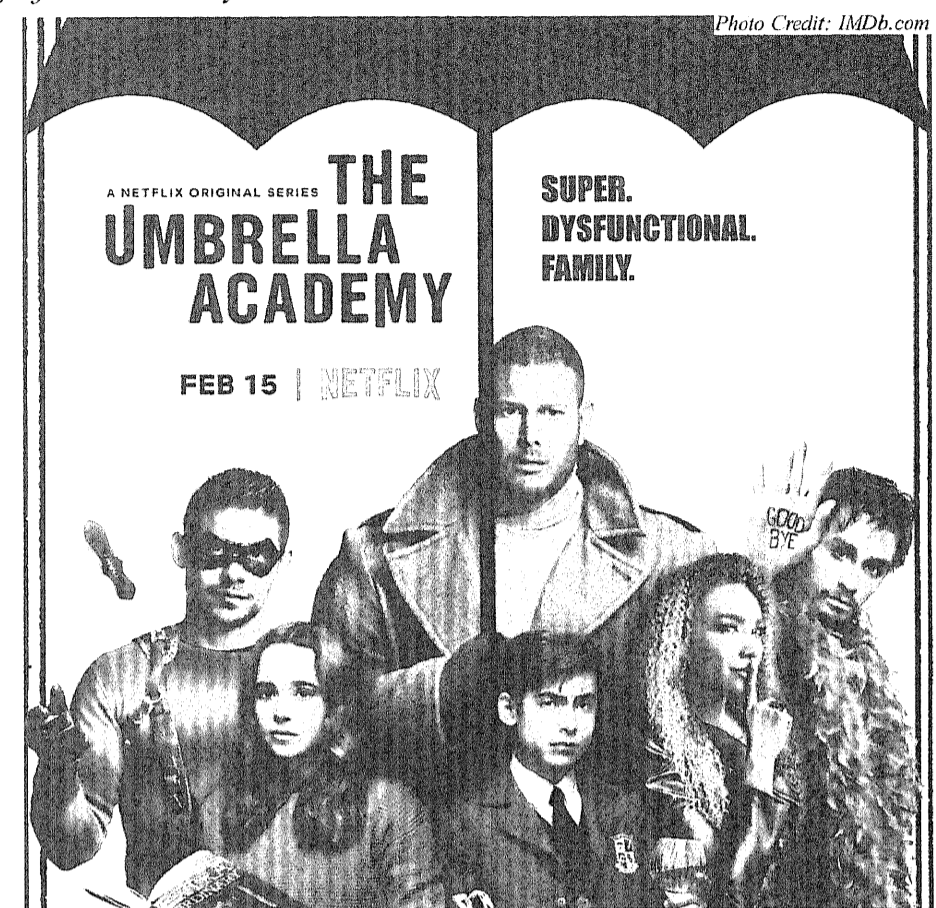
Vanya's love interest on the other hand, Harold Jenkins, has no elasticity. From his introduction, the average viewer can easily determine that the character has ulterior motives. With no other family member do we have such a quick outside-of-the-family connection.

This then escalates into the biggest problem of the show. While the principal nuance can be best found in the chemistry between the seven brothers and sisters, mother Grace and the deceased Reginald's ape sidekick - Pogo, all the other ingredients that could make a show like this work are just not found.

The first episode tells us that we're delving into a murder mystery. Then the mystery expands into why the world is going to end in eight days. Suddenly, we're thrown into a family drama. Buddy-cop. Damsel in distress. Retribution story.

With "The Umbrella Academy" only being ten episodes thus far, the genre doesn't want to remain on the straight and narrow.

Although it's obviously okay to float



The first season premiered on Netflix on February 15th, 2019.

in between types, the feel of certain scenes can become fragile. Violent scenes contrasted with the upbeat songs stay true to the former. Meaningful character developments become watered down. Most importantly, what should feel like a world ending moment feels exactly like that.

Not once at any point during the first season did viewers feel as though any of the children came any closer to saving the world than the moment when they were

told about the revelation by Number Five.

Whether it was for the viewer's sanity or it was a side effect of quick genre switching, the feeling of impending doom as one should feel when there's a doomsday clock, was pushed to the side.

Nevertheless, even with it's faults, "The Umbrella Academy" teaches through its weakness, even with the end right around the corner, don't forget about the simpler things in life.

Seeking Revenge in "Cold Pursuit"

A Son for a Son When Blood is Spilled

BY: ROSEANNE CASSAR

Liam Neeson stars in the 2019 revenge thriller movie, "Cold Pursuit." Neeson plays the character Nelson Coxman. Coxman works for a snow plowing company in the mountain ski resort town of Kehoe, Denver.

Coxman is portrayed in the movie as a hard worker, who receives a "Citizen of the Year" award. Coxman later finds out that his son was found dead. An autopsy was done, where the results showed that his son died of a drug overdose.

After some time has lapsed, Coxman finds one of his son's friends. They were hiding in the garage while Coxman was contemplating on committing suicide. Coxman was convinced enough that his son was not a drug user of any kind. Since he recently lost his son, he sets out to find the truth of what happened and solve the mystery to help him get closure.

Coxman stops at nothing to find his son's perpetrator. He goes through many people until he finds his main target. His target is "a slick, dangerous, well-protected drug lord called "Viking." Viking is played by Tom Bateman.

While Viking is trying to figure out who is killing his men, he points fingers to his competitor drug lord, "White Bull". White Bull is played by Tom Jackson.

Viking is so steamed by the killings of his men that he doesn't realize that he started a war between territories when he innocently killed the son of White Bull and hung his dead body over a street sign for his father to find him.

Chief White Bull was fuming when he discovered his son's dead body. White Bull made a vow to his men that they were to get revenge on Viking by kidnapping and killing his son.

White Bull's vow: "We are to kill a son for a son because blood has been spilled on their land." Meanwhile, Coxman visits his "brother/former partner in crime" Wingman. Wingman is played by William Forsythe.

Wingman is a retired hitman who worked for Viking. Once Wingman explained to Nelson what the beef was between Viking and White Bull, he made a decision to help his brother create a plan to get to Viking.

Wingman suggested to hire a hit man by the name of "The Eskimo" for ninety

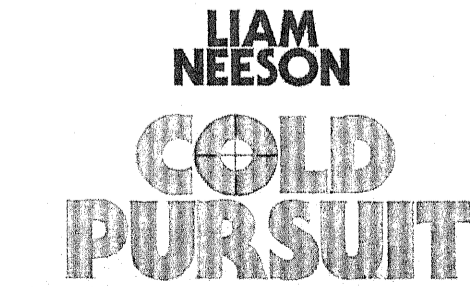
thousand dollars up front and then pay the rest once the job was done.

The Eskimo went to Viking and spilled the beans that he was there to do a hit on him. He was selling the ninety thousand dollars to Viking to save his own life but Viking had different plans. Viking agreed to buy what the Eskimo was selling for the name of the person who sent him.

The Eskimo told him Coxman. Viking thought that the Wingman hired him to kill him, but he was wrong. Viking killed the wrong Coxman brother.

Coxman's plan worked to get to Viking. The plan was to intervene a kidnapping of Viking's son and bring him back to his house. In turn lure both drug dealers to

REVENGE IS BEST SERVED COLD



Liam Neeson stars as a father investigating his son's death.

meet at Coxman's house for a blood bath.

In the midst of all the shooting, everybody dies except Coxman and White Bull. The female officer arrived at the scene to collect the dead bodies. The female police officer is played by Emmy Rossum.

Coxman and White Bull ride in a snow plow in a serene, nonviolent and peaceful harmony knowing what it's like to lose a child. Cold Pursuit is directed by Hans Petter Moland. It's a "remake from a 2014 Norwegian film "In Order of Disappearance"."

This movie is not only action packed, but includes some laughable moments, as well as some serious ones too.



BANNER OPINIONS

The Disappointment of the Jussie Smollett Case

How People Should Handle and Think About Alleged Hate Crimes

BY: DEJON VIRGO

TMZ reported Empire actor Jussie Smollett was attacked around 2 am after he stepped out of a subway in Chicago. Smollett said that two white men attacked him by beating him, pouring bleach on him, tying a rope around his neck, and shouting racial slurs.

One of the attackers shouted, "This is MAGA country," a reference to President Trump's slogan.

The following day security footage showed two Nigerian men who police believe committed the attack. Smollett then went on Good Morning America where he was interviewed by Robin Roberts and told his side of the story. He said, "Who the fuck would make something up like this or try to add something to it?"

This was in response to critics who were questioning the details of the alleged attack. However, the two men, who are brothers, talked to the police and said that Smollett staged the whole attack. The police then asked Smollett to come back in for questioning, which he failed to do.

Shortly after, the police announced that they would be treating Smollett as a suspect and not a victim. The Chicago police department then went to a grand jury to see if they should charge Smollett with



Jussie Smollett trying to get away from reporters after court.

because investigations, as expected, have all sorts of twists and turns that leave everyone's head spinning.

This by no means is a declaration that hate crime hoaxes are a problem or happen frequently, but this case gives fuel to such a narrative for conservatives who want to paint Trump supporters as "victims."

The victims of hate crimes are the ones who are hurt the most because it is so hard for them to come forward and tell their story. They are often scared that the police or the public won't believe them, especially when dealing with a high profile person.

This should be worrying to people, not the fact that Smollett lied. He is going to jail if he lied, but think about how many

Photo Credit: LATimes.com

victims will not come forward with these stories because of Smollett. Imagine the increase of hate crimes and hate groups in America that can occur.

According to a national analysis by the FBI, there were more than 7,100 hate crimes reported in 2017—a 17% increase. This is the fourth year in a row that has had such an increase.

Hate groups have also risen for the fourth year in a row, according to the Southern Property Law Center in 2018. Hate groups have risen to an all time high of 1,020 cases. This shows that hate groups and crimes have increased over the years.

While Smollett allegedly lied, it shouldn't change the fact that hate crimes are real and they are happening more than ever. The lessons everyone should learn from this case is that jumping to conclusions is not the best thing to do and that letting an investigation play out is the best thing for our country.

Another lesson is that this case in no way proves that hate crimes are a hoax or that they're on the rise or happen frequently. When cases like these do happen, the most affected ones are the real victims of hate crimes who are even lucky enough to have survived such an ordeal.

Will the Federal Government Ever Legalize Marijuana?

The Benefit of Legalizing Marijuana in the United States

BY: MAXWELL VELIKODNY

The legalization of marijuana has been a taboo subject in the United States until very recently. The government has stigmatized marijuana for decades. President Ronald Reagan even declared that pot was, "the most dangerous drug."

What has changed since then?

As of February 27, 2019, thirty-three states have legalized medical marijuana and 10 states have legalized the recreational use of marijuana. Mayor Bill De Blasio and Governor Andrew Cuomo advocate for marijuana legalization which makes New York the likeliest to be the 11th state to legalize marijuana.

There have been many factors in the rapid interest of marijuana legalization. One of the most influential was the increase in research on cannabis.

Many researchers began taking a keen interest in marijuana in the late twentieth century because of the effects it had on people. During their research, they uncovered the chemical composition of marijuana, which consisted of two crucial chemicals called THC and CBD.

THC is what makes people high and gives the psychoactive effect. CBD, on the other hand, does not. Upon further investigation, according to Honest Marijuana, researchers discovered that, "CBD lowers anxiety, reduces nausea and vomiting, fights tumor and cancer cells, suppresses seizure activity, combats anxiety and depression, mediates psychotic disorders, tempers neurodegenerative disorders, and mitigates inflammatory disorders."

Researchers have been successful in genetically engineering CBD cannabis to enhance its effects. CBDs are now much

safer and have fewer risks. Researchers also speculate that CBDs can potentially become the new non-addictive painkiller, which is excellent because hard drugs like morphine would become obsolete.

This information has become readily available to many people thanks to the advent of technology. The general public is now becoming more educated on the benefits of medical marijuana and creating an informed opinion on whether it should become a norm in the United States. According to Business Insider, 62% of Americans believe medical marijuana is beneficial and should be legalized.

Politicians have begun advocating for legalization because of the potential job market that comes with cannabis legalization. The recent 2018 Farm Bill that was passed in December allowed farmers in specific states to grow hemp. Politicians see the potential marijuana business as an economic gain.

There are many economic benefits to legalizing marijuana. The main one is the tax revenue the federal government and states would earn. By taxing cannabis, the governments and states would have more money to allocate for social programs, education, departments, and infrastructure.

It is clear that the demand for marijuana has only grown across the world, especially in the United States. Last year, Canada legalized the recreational and medical use of marijuana which created a boom in cannabis companies.

The cannabis industry has been compared to Marlboro and other cigarette industries because of the potential growth it has to offer. It is currently a \$16 billion-dollar industry and is projected to grow to \$60

billion-dollar industry by 2026 which is a conservative estimate according to U.S. News. Investors see a lot of potential in these businesses.

Most of the larger cannabis companies are from Canada, like Aurora Cannabis, Cronos Group, Tilray, Aphira, and Canopy Growth. Most of these companies have more than tripled in value in the past two years according to the charts on Yahoo Finance.

Cannabis companies are partnering with big businesses. One example is Cronos Group's partnership with Altria. According to Yahoo Finance Altria is partnered with the largest cigarette company, Philip Morris International, and has invested \$2.4 billion dollars into Cronos Group in exchange for 45% of the company.

These big business names are trying to be a part of the marijuana industry because they see the potential and benefits. Cronos



The legalization of marijuana would allow the Federal Government to stimulate the U.S. economic growth.

is not the only one who is getting all these investments either. Many small companies are also getting these large investments because of the promising profit they offer.

The marijuana industry is ready to step into America soil. According to the Cannabis Business Times the 2018 farm bill has allowed many cannabis companies an opportunity to start producing hemp, CBDs, and certain THC's in certain states. One such state is Colorado, which has already legalized recreational and medical use of marijuana.

Most Liberal Democrats are for marijuana legalization. It is believed that by the end of 2019 or 2020, cannabis will be legalized because of the Democratic majority in the House of Representatives.

It is very likely that marijuana will be legalized in the near future and for good reasons. The potential benefits are too good to pass up.

Photo Credit: Bpr.Berkeley.edu

SEX AND RELATIONSHIPS

The Struggles of Loving A Gamer Boyfriend

What's it Really like Dating a Gamer?

BY: PHILIP SANZONE

People have questions such as how video game addiction can impact one's life. This includes how it affects romantic relationships, and the emotional wellbeing of everyone involved.

To understand more, I wanted to ask females what they thought the pros and cons are about dating a gamer guy.

As someone who is more or less a guy who likes to play games such as, "League of Legends", "Sea of Thieves", and other story-based games, I was curious about what they had to say.

I can say that if I am playing "League of Legends", telling my mom or sister "I'll do it later" becomes a biblical scripture to me. Luckily though, even if I'm in the middle of playing a game I can assure that I can pause them and do what I have to do when an obligation needs my attention.

That is not to say that this might be the problem. For some people, even if the game can be paused the player can't get themselves to do it. Also, even if they do they might not want to step away from the game for too long.

If you take a look at how the effects of a crazed gamer addict drains a relationship, it is apparent that there is a distorted allocation of priorities. This comes from an anonymous source who was kind enough to share some input.

Letting games take over a relationship and prioritizing the girlfriend as the hobby instead of video game is completely wrong. Relationships are a scary and more of-



Love is a battleground only when you make it one.

Photo Credit: JustDate.com

It sounds obvious that if someone pushes aside another for a hobby, the relationship may be heading onto the road of failure if improvements aren't made soon.

Their lack of devotion and commitment in the relationship creates a lack of

Veronica, The Banner's very own Editor-in-Chief, explains that while dating someone that was into games, he did not put games above their relationship.

Another anonymous individual provided good insight into dating a gamer dude. "Does it become a bigger problem when he asks to play games with you? If you really think about it, playing games can actually serve as a bonding experience for both parties."

Taking over the T.V. in a general space gets annoying if it's continual occurrence. Again, relationships are a tricky game and it all depends on the influence of how each partner chooses to approach the relationship.

Maybe putting down the game and thinking more about the person they held close to their heart would have helped the relationship, but each person has their own ways of going about it.

How people feel about others is an important factor into understand ourselves.

I found many sites about women's opinions on gamer guys, so there are plenty of other ways to get a better understanding of what the opposite gender thinks about gamer guys.

The first step to healing a struggling relationship is to communicate your concerns. Things like these are fixable, it just takes a little patience.

ten than not an emotional rollercoaster. A person must be willing to ride one if they want a caring relationship. But instead, some people choose the kiddie ride, where they don't have to put on the harnesses so they can jump ship at any time.

My Soulmate is—Myself?

Self-Marriage is the New Self Love

BY: MARK DEUTSCH

For those that have trouble trying to find a new partner or a lifelong soulmate, there is a last resort person to marry. It is a marriage that will never end in divorce and where there is no betrayal.

That special someone is yourself.

That's right. That "possible" last resort is something that goes by the name of self-marriage. It's a real thing.

Picking apart this absurd concept can get complicated. There are some obviously glaring faults that people can see just from

looking at the surface, but an in-depth analysis will provide more details.

This is seen as a union between the body, ego and soul.

For the body, the message seems to be for the groom or bride to take pride in being content with their own body. It's a sign of affirmation that perhaps maybe the only embodiment could be your own body.

The ego of the groom or bride in the marriage puts the person's mind in a relaxed state and mood. This self-proposal has progressed to a certain extent that people have a legitimate claim for it. The ef-

fects of this one person marriage can even trickle down into the soul.

Now the same benefits for the soul are similar to the traits for the ego, such as putting a person at ease or their mood. But having a solo marriage allows a person to delve even further into themselves as a whole better than with someone.

Since that's the core values of sologamy in a general sense, here are some of the major or minor oversites and holes in this wedding.

First off would be the glaring hole in the idea of self marriage that even a blind monkey can perceive blindfolded.

There's the fact that since, basically a person knows himself for years, how does marrying himself help? What a glaring oversight among many that has deflected possibly many followers.

Next up would be the wedding issue about having the government change something essential to the solo bride/groom.

The government doesn't recognize self marriages and doesn't permit marriage licenses for them. So this means the wedding was in fact considered not legal, there is some maneuverability for other things.

Such as for this stupid decision that seems to be merely symbolic in nature, but

this takes the wedding cake for asininess.

Apparently, since self marriage isn't recognized by the state, it's possible to marry yourself if already married. No joke, because self marriage isn't legal but can still happen anyone can do it.

The reason for this is because solo marriage skates by any controversial taboos, such as polygamy or bestiality among other horrific things.

Essentially, the main idea behind this is that self marriage is more symbolic than anything. Yet many people who have chosen themselves as their sole soulmate, treat this sole matrimony as real.

Now this choice of choosing a certainly new love life has some perks that can be enjoyed, although they are the essentially more idealistic.

Now if the wedding vows are treated seriously as real, then that means that the only person to have sex with is yourself. No one would actually adhere to that marriage if it means going celibate.

When all is said and done, this peculiar relationship has the usual cons and pros as with any new idea.

This may be the right path for a person to follow if necessary. Choose whether or not to fall back on plan M- if so, then good luck.



Photo Credit: Shared.com

SPORTS

The Last Part of the NBA Season Kicks Off End of Season Showdowns

BY: GEORGE BURKERT

With the trade deadline and all-star break over, the last half of the NBA season kicks off. Some teams are guaranteed to make the playoffs and be a title contender, while others are struggling and need to improve fast.

One team that is playing great are the Milwaukee Bucks, who are currently the best team in the NBA record wise. Star player Giannis Antetokounmpo is playing like an MVP averaging 27 points a game.

Besides the amazing playing of Antetokounmpo, the great playing of first-time all-star Kris Middleton and great coaching of Mike Budenholzer are also impressing fans. Right now, the Bucks are second in points scored in a game and top 10 in defense.

After the Bucks in the Eastern Conference are the Toronto Raptors, who acquired all-star center Marc Gasol at the trade deadline. The Raptors have played well this season with the superstar play of Kawhi Leonard, the rise of Pascal Siakim, and the great coaching of Nick Nurse.

The Raptors are hoping to win the Eastern Conference after losing to the Cleveland Cavaliers the last 3 post-seasons.

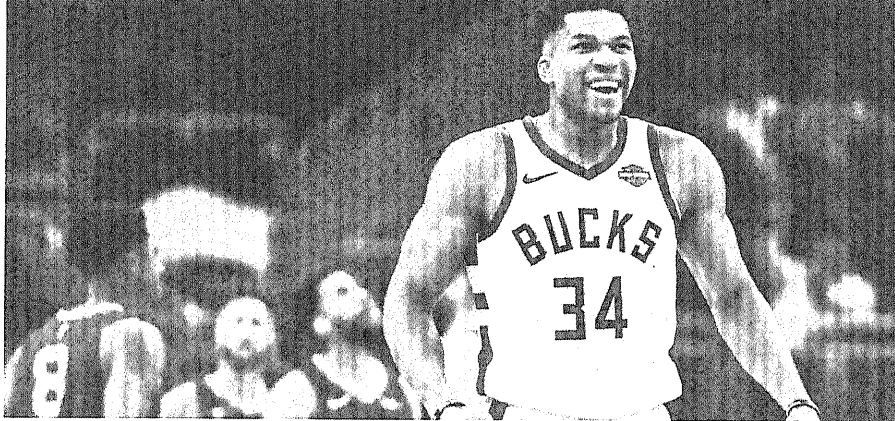
The Raptors are also hoping to make a good run in the playoffs to keep Leonard, who will be a free agent this off-season and has been rumored to go to either the Los Angeles Lakers or Clippers in free agency.

Another team doing well are the Oklahoma City Thunder, who are currently

the third seed in the Western Conference. Paul George is having a great season averaging 26 points a game and is not only in the MVP conversation, but the Defensive Player of the Year conversation.

If the Thunder want to challenge the Golden State Warriors, they'll need former MVP, Russell Westbrook, to step up his play. Despite averaging a triple-double again this season, Westbrook has taken a step back in his offensive numbers.

Photo Credit: USA Today.com



Giannis Antetokounmpo so far has lead the Bucks to the top of the standings.

A team that has caught everyone by surprise and could possibly sneak into the playoffs are the Sacramento Kings, who are currently 30-28. The great play of guards De'Aaron Foxx and Buddy Hield have made them a team to take seriously.

At the trade deadline, they gained Harrison Barnes, who has playoff and championship experience with the Warriors. The play and experience of Barnes along with

Foxx and Hield continuing to improve and show their all-star potential could help the Kings make the playoffs for the first time since 2006.

A team with more pressure to win the Eastern Conference are the Philadelphia 76ers. Months after acquiring Jimmy Butler in a trade to help their young stars Joel Embiid and Ben Simmons, the 76ers traded for Tobias Harris, who averaged 21 points with the Los Angeles Clippers this

season.

With the addition of Harris and a deeper bench along with trading away Markelle Fultz who has struggled with the team, the 76ers have higher expectations.

The 76ers also hope to resign both Butler and Harris in free agency this off-season, so they also want to prove to them they are a championship caliber team.

One team that needs to improve fast if

they want to make the playoff are the Los Angeles Lakers, who are currently out of the playoffs due to injuries and poor play in games they could have won.

Lebron James, who hasn't missed the playoffs since 2005, missed 17 games due to a groin injury and Lonzo Ball has missed a lot of games.

The Lakers failed to get Anthony Davis by the trade deadline, willing to trade away their young players for the New Orleans Pelicans star.

Along with James having to get into playoff mode early, young players like Kyle Kuzma and Brandon Ingram will have to step it up.

Another team that needs to step up are the Boston Celtics, who despite being the fifth seed in the Eastern Conference, have been disappointing after playing well last year despite losing Gordon Hayward for the entire season and Kyrie Irving the end of the season.

The young players that showed promise last season have not taken the next step, Hayward has not played well, and Al Horford is showing some age.

Out of the Eastern Conference teams that have a chance to make it to the NBA Finals, the Celtics were the only team that did not make any trades that could help them.

Another concern the Celtics are dealing with is the uncertain future of Irving, who said back in October he would resign with the Celtics, but lately, he has said he is unsure and is only focused on this season.

The Tearing of the Sneaker Featuring Nike and Zion

A Future Relationship Between Zion and Nike?

BY: KYLE FORBES

Duke freshman standout, Zion Williamson, is dealing with a Grade 1, or minor, right knee sprain. The accident occurred during the ACC rivalry game between the University of North Carolina (UNC) and the Duke Blue Devils.

Williamson was trying to change direction but fell, while tearing his Nike shoe. He ripped a hole between the bottom sole of the sneaker and the rest of the top layer of the footwear.

Duke is a Nike sponsored school so Williamson has agreed to wear Nike shoes throughout a season. Williamson has averaged 22.4 points and 9.2 rebounds per game.

In December 2018, Nike has been reported to benefit \$8.95 billion in revenue.

Williamson has 2.5 million followers on the Instagram social media site.

Nike stock could drop because of the drama surrounding the Paul George 2.5 model accident.

The name of the Nike shoe Williamson worn during the accident is the Paul George (PG) 2.5 model sneaker. George is a National Basketball Association (NBA) reporter from the Oklahoma City Thunder.

George is also performing at an MVP level. The small forward said: "I want to wish him all the best. Outside of that, I don't really know what happened. I've

been talking to Nike to see what went wrong and what happened with the shoe. I take pride in that. My shoe is a successful shoe, not only in college but in the NBA."

George also dealt with a leg injury while running for a block in a Team United States of America (USA) game. George was playing in a Blue vs. White game during the Team USAs' preparation for the 2019 Olympics.

The Oklahoma City Thunder star also said: "It hasn't happened to me as long as I've been in this shoe." We've made three generations, going on four now of my shoe, of being successful. So I didn't necessarily feel any way about that part - the negative part of it. My only concern was for Zion, honestly.

George could be thinking about the health of Zion or his previous injury in the 2014 Team USA game. George could also be thinking of how Zions torn shoe could affect the sales of Georges' future sneaker performance.

Demarcus Cousins, who plays on the Golden State Warriors, had some advice for Williamson. "College basketball and the NCAA is bulls---. My advice to [Williamson] is to do what's best for him and his family. College does nothing for you at this point. You've proven you're a No. 1 pick at this point. You've proven your talent...there's so many risks involved to get



Photo Credit: ClutchPoints.com

Paul Georges' 2.5 model was torn by Zion Williamson

to the ultimate goal."

When the accident happened, Barack Obama, former President of the United States, pointed from the crowd bench when the Blue Devils star shredded his shoe.

In most recent years, Aaron Gordon, Manu Ginobili, Andrew Bogut, and Tony Wroten have torn their shoes in a NBA game.

Gordon of the Orlando Magic tore the side of his Nike before going to the Magics bench.

Ginobili was seen walking to the San Antonio Spurs bench after tearing his Nike shoe during a play.

Former Golden State Warriors center, Bogut, shredded his right shoe in between the bottom sole and the upper weight of the

footwear.

Tony Wroten, while dribbling in a Philadelphia 76ers uniform in an NBA game, spinned out of a Jordan sneaker. Jordan shoes also plays a role in the Nike company.

All five sneakers, including Williamson's sneaker, tore during a basketball game. The difference is that four out of five of the players tore their footwear in a professional league.

After the Williamson accident, The Chicago Tribune reported that Nikes' stock dropped as much as 1.7 percent in New York trading on February 21st, 2019.

Williamson wore Adidas shoes when he played in high school of Spartanburg (S.C.) Day School.